



Senate Committee Approves 2007 Interior Appropriations Bill

June 29, 2006

Washington, DC – The Senate Appropriations Committee today approved the \$26 billion FY 2007 Interior Appropriations Bill, which includes millions of dollars in funding for many significant California priorities, including \$950,000 for historic preservation projects, \$300,000 for the eradication of marijuana on national forest lands, and \$1 million for perchlorate cleanup, U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) announced. The bill also prohibits drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf in California.

“The Senate Appropriations Committee today approved millions of dollars for many projects that are vitally important to the preservation of California’s natural and historic resources,” Senator Feinstein said. **“I was especially pleased that the Committee demonstrated its support for restoring the Angel Island Immigration Station, eradicating the cultivation of marijuana in national forests, and funding perchlorate cleanup in the Inland Empire. Equally significant is the prohibition of drilling on the Outer Continental Shelf in California – we must protect California’s majestic coastlines from the dangers of oil spills.”**

The bill included several provisions with particular significance to California:

Historic Preservation

- \$450,000 for Mission San Luis Rey for fire safety improvements
- \$500,000 for the Angel Island Immigration Station restoration

“Angel Island Immigration Station served as the Western port of entry for one million immigrants, including approximately 175,000 Chinese-Americans. Last year, to honor that legacy, Congress authorized \$15 million in federal funding for preservation and restoration work for the Immigration Station. The \$500,000 included in this bill would begin the restoration of the 1910 Hospital, which would be used as a museum, and an administrative, interpretative and genealogical research facility. I look forward to the day when millions of Americans can visit the location where their ancestors arrived in hopes of building a better future for their families.”

National Forests

- \$300,000 for the Tulare County Sheriff to eradicate marijuana on national forest lands; the Committee urges the Forest Service to examine ways to meet increased demand for counterdrug operations in California as part of a revision of its law enforcement allocation methodology
- \$2 million for a conservation easement at the Baxter Ranch in Sonoma County
- \$291.792 million for Forest Service hazardous fuels reduction
- \$10 million for biomass utilization grants, community capacity building, technical assistance, and marketing assistance

“Many California counties continue to shoulder the burden for eradicating marijuana fields on federal lands. In Tulare County, drug cartels have recruited illegal immigrants to cultivate marijuana plants on terraced hills and these well-armed criminal elements have accosted visitors and destroyed pristine forest. The Forest Service has contracted with Tulare County to eradicate marijuana in the National Forest. The \$300,000 in funding will go a long way in helping the Forest Service undertake operations to counter this growing problem in our national parks.”

Land Acquisition

- \$500,000 to acquire land for the Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard Preserve
- \$500,000 to acquire inholdings in the California Desert Wilderness

National Parks

- \$2.444 million for coastal watershed restoration at Point Reyes National Seashore
- \$8.754 million for the Death Valley National Park Headquarters and Visitors Center water system
- \$2.255 million to remove failing roads within Redwood National Park
- \$19.256 million for the Presidio Trust

National Wildlife Refuges

- \$1 million for restoration of the south San Francisco Bay salt ponds and for levee maintenance to protect Silicon Valley from tidal flooding at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge
- \$900,000 for water quality monitoring in the south San Francisco Bay salt ponds at Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge
- \$1.235 million for water supply and management at Klamath Basin National Wildlife Refuge

Environmental Protection Agency

- \$1 million for Inland Empire Perchlorate Wellhead Treatment
- \$500,000 for the City of Santa Ana for new water mains

- \$500,000 for the City of Eureka water treatment facility
- \$500,000 for the City of Sacramento sewer upgrade
- \$400,000 for the City of East Palo Alto new drinking water well
- \$400,000 for the Central California Ozone Study
- \$20.417 million for the National Estuary Program

“The true scope of perchlorate contamination is still unknown. But the more we look for perchlorate contamination, the more we find it. In California, at least 350 of the state's water sources have been contaminated by perchlorate. We must take steps to protect our communities from perchlorate contamination, so they can have access to water that is safe and clean. The \$1 million in funding allocated in this bill will help cleanup efforts in communities in California’s Inland Empire, where cities like Rialto, Colton, and Fontana have been seriously affected by the contamination of perchlorate.”

Senator Feinstein also won inclusion of a provision that establishes a schedule for the Forest Service to complete its environmental analysis, consistent with existing law, and make a final decision on a proposed hazardous fuel reduction project, the Kings River Demonstration Project in the Sierra National Forest.

This project will help reduce brush and other flammable material in a fire-prone area, and is necessary to provide enough volume to keep open the only mill in the southern Sierras, the Sierra Forest Products sawmill. Without the mill, there would be no infrastructure to support hazardous fuel reduction in the southern Sierras in the future, thereby increasing the costs of needed fuel reduction efforts to a prohibitive level.

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